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## Miga,jāla Sutta 1

Paṭhama Miga,jāla Sutta, The First Discourse to Migajāla | S 35.63

Theme: True solitude

Translated by Piya Tan ©2007

### 1 Miga,jāla

**1.1** Nothing is known of the elder **Miga,jāla**,<sup>1</sup> except that he is a son of the lady Visākhā. Having heard the Dharma during his frequent visits to the monastery, he renounces the world and in due course becomes an arhat (ThaA 1:452 f). **The Miga,jāla Thera,gāthā** records the elder Miga,jāla's verses (**Tha 417-422**).<sup>2</sup>

**1.2** The Saṃyutta Nikāya contains a whole chapter to his name, **the Miga,jāla Vagga** (the chapter on Miga,jāla), that is, the second chapter of the Saḷāyatana Saṃyutta (the connected discourses on the 6 sense-bases, S 35).<sup>3</sup> Only the first two suttas of the Miga,jāla Vagga are connected with Miga,-jāla.<sup>4</sup>

### 2 The Miga,jāla Suttas

**2.1** In **Miga,jāla Sutta 1** (S 35.63), Miga,jāla asks the Buddha about the definition of a lone dweller (*eka,vihārī*), that is, one who practises solitary meditation. The Sutta defines it in terms of a mind that is free from sensual attachment.<sup>5</sup>

Clearly, **the Miga,jāla Sutta 1** (S 35.63) is taught before the Miga,jāla Sutta 2 (they have the same theme, on the 6 sense-bases and spiritual solitude).<sup>6</sup> This is because both Suttas records an almost identical teaching, but while the first Suts only mentions Miga,jāla's practice, **the Miga,jāla Sutta 2** (S 35.64) records his arhathood.<sup>7</sup>

**2.2** In **Miga,jāla Sutta 2** (S 35.64), Miga,jāla asks the Buddha for a brief teaching before going into his own solitary forest retreat. The Buddha instructs him on the nature of the 6 sense-objects, and how not delighting in them leads to the ending of suffering. Migajāla practises as instructed and becomes an arhat.<sup>8</sup>

### 3 The lone dweller

#### **3.1 EKA,VIHĀRĪ**

**3.1.1** The theme of the Sutta is the "lone dweller" or "solitary practitioner" (*eka,vihārī*) [§3], whose undivided task is that of solitary life dedicated to meditation. It should be noted here that the word *vihārī* also connotes a "practitioner." We also have, for example, the term *dharmavihārī*, "one who lives the Dharma," that is, one who practises the Dharma.<sup>9</sup>

This interesting expression has other nuances. It also refers to the monastic training to live the "holy life" (*brahma,cariya*), that is, one of celibacy, free from any socializing (including sexual intercourse), or dealings in economic or money terms. In short, he is a true renunciant.

**3.1.2** The keyword *eka*, here rendered as "lone," also means "one." In meditative terms, it has a vital sense, that of the "oneness" of the mind, that is, samadhi (*samādhi*) or dhyana (*jhāna*).<sup>10</sup> In other words, a lone dweller is a meditator who attains deep samadhi or high dhyana, which he uses as a tool for attaining arhathood. This especially refers to the monastic life. However, a lay practitioner, too, if

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<sup>1</sup> *Miga* generally means "animal, beast," or specifically, "a deer," while *jāla* means "net." We could render his name into idiomatic English as "hunting-net" (S:W 4:16 n1).

<sup>2</sup> SD 20.10.

<sup>3</sup> S 35.63-73/4:35-45, dealing with the senses. For other details on **Miga,jāla**, see SD 20.10 Intro.

<sup>4</sup> In other words, the chapter derived its name from these first 2 suttas.

<sup>5</sup> S 35.63/4:35-37 @ SD 44.6.

<sup>6</sup> S 35.63/4:35-37 @ SD 44.6.

<sup>7</sup> S 35.64/4:37 f @ SD 44.7.

<sup>8</sup> S 35.64/4:37 f @ SD 44.7.

<sup>9</sup> On *dharmavihārī*, see **Dhamma,vihārī S** (A 5.73+74/3:86-89), SD 44.4+5.

<sup>10</sup> This sense of *eka* is esp significant in the cpd *bhadd'eka,ratta*, "the one who delights in the auspicious oneness": see **Bhadd'eka,ratta S** (M 131,13) + SD 8.9 (1), esp (1.3.3).

he so chooses, may lead such a life, even if only for a duration, for the sake of attaining dhyana, or even for some level of mindfulness, for the sake of attaining at least streamwinning.<sup>11</sup>

**3.1.3** This phrase, “lone dweller” (*eka, vihārī*), strongly contrasts against the phrase “**one who lives with a partner**” or “a dweller with a partner” (*sa, dutiya, vihārī*), which is used in the Sutta in a moral sense to refer to craving (*taṇhā*), since craving means desiring more, especially of *others* and *other* things, including coupling with another.

However, the term applies positively where a group of monks or nuns live together for the purpose of solitary meditation, as exemplified by Anuruddha, Nandiya and Kimbila in **the (Anuruddha) Upakkilesa Sutta** (M 128).<sup>12</sup> More broadly, a “second” (*dutiya*) can refer to any partner or partners that a monastic socializes with, or any immoral or distracting relationship that hinders the spiritual life.

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## The First Discourse to Migajāla

S 35.63

1 Originating at Sāvattthī.

### Migajāla’s question

2 Then, the venerable Migajāla approached the Blessed One, saluted him and then sat down at one side.

3 Seated thus at one side, the venerable Migajāla said this to the Blessed One:

“**A lone dweller, a lone dweller (*eka, vihārī*)**,’ bhante, it is said. [36] In what way, bhante, is one a lone dweller, and in what way is one living with a partner?”<sup>13</sup>

### The dweller with a partner

4 (1) “There are, Migajāla, **forms**, cognizable by the eye,  
that are desirable, pleasant, agreeable, lovely, arousing sense-desire, enticing.<sup>14</sup>

If a monk is enticed by them,  
welcomes them,

remains attached to them,

then, on account of that approving, welcoming, remaining attached to them, delight arises.

When there is *delight*, there is lust.

When there is *lust*, there is bondage.

Bound by the bonds of delight, Migajāla, a monk is said to be **one living with a partner**.

5 (2) “There are, Migajāla, **sounds**, cognizable by the ear,  
*that are desirable, pleasant, agreeable, lovely, arousing sense-desire, enticing.*

If a monk is enticed by them,

welcomes them,

remains attached to them,

then, on account of that approving, welcoming, remaining attached to them, delight arises.

When there is *delight*, there is lust.

When there is *lust*, there is bondage.

Bound by the bonds of delight, Migajāla, a monk is said to be one living with a partner.

6 (3) “There are, Migajāla, **smells**, cognizable by the nose,  
*that are desirable, pleasant, agreeable, lovely, arousing sense-desire, enticing.*

<sup>11</sup> On streamwinning, see (Anicca) Cakkhu S (S 25.1), SD 16.7.

<sup>12</sup> M 128,11-14 @ SD 5.18.

<sup>13</sup> “One who lives with a partner” or “a dweller with a partner” (*sa, dutiya, vihārī*): see (3.1.3).

<sup>14</sup> “Desirable...delightful,” *iṭṭhā kantā manāpā piya, rūpā kāmūpasamhitā rajanīyā*.

If a monk is enticed by them,  
welcomes them,  
remains attached to them,  
then, on account of that approving, welcoming, remaining attached to them, delight arises.  
When there is delight, there is lust.  
When there is lust, there is bondage.  
Bound by the bonds of delight, Migajāla, a monk is said to be one living with a partner.  
7 (4) “There are, Migajāla, **tastes**, cognizable by the tongue,  
that are desirable, pleasant, agreeable, lovely, arousing sense-desire, enticing.  
If a monk is enticed by them,  
welcomes them,  
remains attached to them,  
then, on account of that approving, welcoming, remaining attached to them, delight arises.  
When there is delight, there is lust.  
When there is lust, there is bondage.  
Bound by the bonds of delight, Migajāla, a monk is said to be one living with a partner.  
8 (5) “There are, Migajāla, **touches**, cognizable by the body,  
that are desirable, pleasant, agreeable, lovely, arousing sense-desire, enticing.  
If a monk is enticed by them,  
welcomes them,  
remains attached to them,  
then, on account of that approving, welcoming, remaining attached to them, delight arises.  
When there is delight, there is lust.  
When there is lust, there is bondage.  
Bound by the bonds of delight, Migajāla, a monk is said to be one living with a partner.  
9 <sup>15</sup>(6) “There are, Migajāla, **mind-objects**, cognizable by the mind,  
that are desirable, pleasant, agreeable, lovely, arousing sense-desire, enticing.  
If a monk is enticed by them,  
welcomes them,  
remains attached to them,  
then, on account of that approving, welcoming, remaining attached to them, delight arises.  
When there is delight, there is lust.  
When there is lust, there is bondage.  
Bound by the bonds of delight, Migajāla, a monk is said to be one living with a partner.

10 And, Migajāla, even if such a monk resorts to a remote lodging in the wilds of the forests and jungles,

where there is little noise, little sound, deserted, hidden from humans, conducive to seclusion,  
he is still called ‘**one living with a partner**.’<sup>16</sup>

11 What is the reason for this?

Because, bhikkhu, craving is his partner, but he has not abandoned it<sup>17</sup>—  
therefore, he is called one living with a partner.

### The lone dweller

12 (1) There are, Migajāla, **forms**, cognizable by the eye,  
that are desirable, pleasant, agreeable, lovely, arousing sense-desire, enticing.

If a monk is not enticed by them,  
does not welcome them,  
does not grasp them,

<sup>15</sup> This section is missing from Se.

<sup>16</sup> *Evam viharī ca migajāla bhikkhu kiñcāpi rañña, vana, patthāni pantāni senāsanāni paṭisevati appa, saddāni appa, nigghosāni vijana, vātāni manussa, rāha-s, seyyakāni paṭisallāna, sārubbāni, atha kho sa, dutiya, viharīti vucati.*

<sup>17</sup> *Taṇhā hi ’ssa dutiyā, sāssa appahīnā.*

does *not* remain attached to them,  
then, on account of that not approving, not welcoming, not remaining attached to them, delight ends.

When there is *no delight*, there is no lust.

When there is *no lust*, there is no bondage.

Freed from the bonds of delight, Migajāla, a monk is said to be a lone dweller.

13 (2) There are, Migajāla, **sounds**, cognizable by the ear,  
*that are desirable, pleasant, agreeable, lovely, arousing sense-desire, enticing.*

If a monk is not enticed by them,

does not welcome them,

does not remain attached to them,

then, on account of that not approving, not welcoming, not remaining attached to them, delight ends.

When there is *no delight*, there is no lust.

When there is *no lust*, [37] there is no bondage.

Freed from the bonds of delight, Migajāla, a monk is said to be a lone dweller.

14 (3) “There are, Migajāla, **smells**, cognizable by the nose,  
*that are desirable, pleasant, agreeable, lovely, arousing sense-desire, enticing.*

If a monk is not enticed by them,

does not welcome them,

does not remain attached to them,

then, on account of that not approving, not welcoming, not remaining attached to them, delight ends.

When there is *no delight*, there is no lust.

When there is *no lust*, there is no bondage.

Freed from the bonds of delight, Migajāla, a monk is said to be a lone dweller.

15 (4) “There are, Migajāla, **tastes**, cognizable by the tongue,  
*that are desirable, pleasant, agreeable, lovely, arousing sense-desire, enticing.*

If a monk is not enticed by them,

does not welcome them,

does not remain attached to them,

then, on account of that not approving, not welcoming, not remaining attached to them, delight ends.

When there is *no delight*, there is no lust.

When there is *no lust*, there is no bondage.

Freed from the bonds of delight, Migajāla, a monk is said to be a lone dweller.

16 (5) “There are, Migajāla, **touches**, cognizable by the body,  
*that are desirable, pleasant, agreeable, lovely, arousing sense-desire, enticing.*

If a monk is not enticed by them,

does not welcome them,

does not remain attached to them,

then, on account of that not approving, not welcoming, not remaining attached to them, delight ends.

When there is *no delight*, there is no lust.

When there is *no lust*, there is no bondage.

Freed from the bonds of delight, Migajāla, a monk is said to be a lone dweller.

17<sup>18</sup>(6) “There are, Migajāla, **mind-objects**, cognizable by the mind,  
*that are desirable, pleasant, agreeable, lovely, arousing sense-desire, enticing.*

If a monk is not enticed by them,

does not welcome them,

does not remain attached to them,

then, on account of that not approving, not welcoming, not remaining attached to them, delight ends.

When there is *no delight*, there is no lust.

When there is *no lust*, there is no bondage.

Freed from the bonds of delight, Migajāla, a monk is said to be a lone dweller.

<sup>18</sup> This section is missing from Se.

### True lone dwelling

**18** And, Migajāla, if such a monk resorts to the vicinity of a village, crowded with monks, with nuns, with laymen, with laywomen, with rajahs, with courtiers, with sectarian teachers, with the pupils of sectarian teachers, he is still called **a lone dweller**.

**19** What is the reason for this?

Because, bhikshu, craving was his partner; but he has abandoned it—therefore, he is called the lone dweller.<sup>19</sup>

— evaṃ —

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<sup>19</sup> *Taṃ kissa hetu, taṇhā hi'ssa dutiyā, sâssa pahīnā, tasmā eka, vihārīti vuccatīti.*